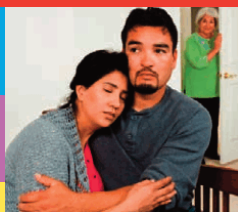
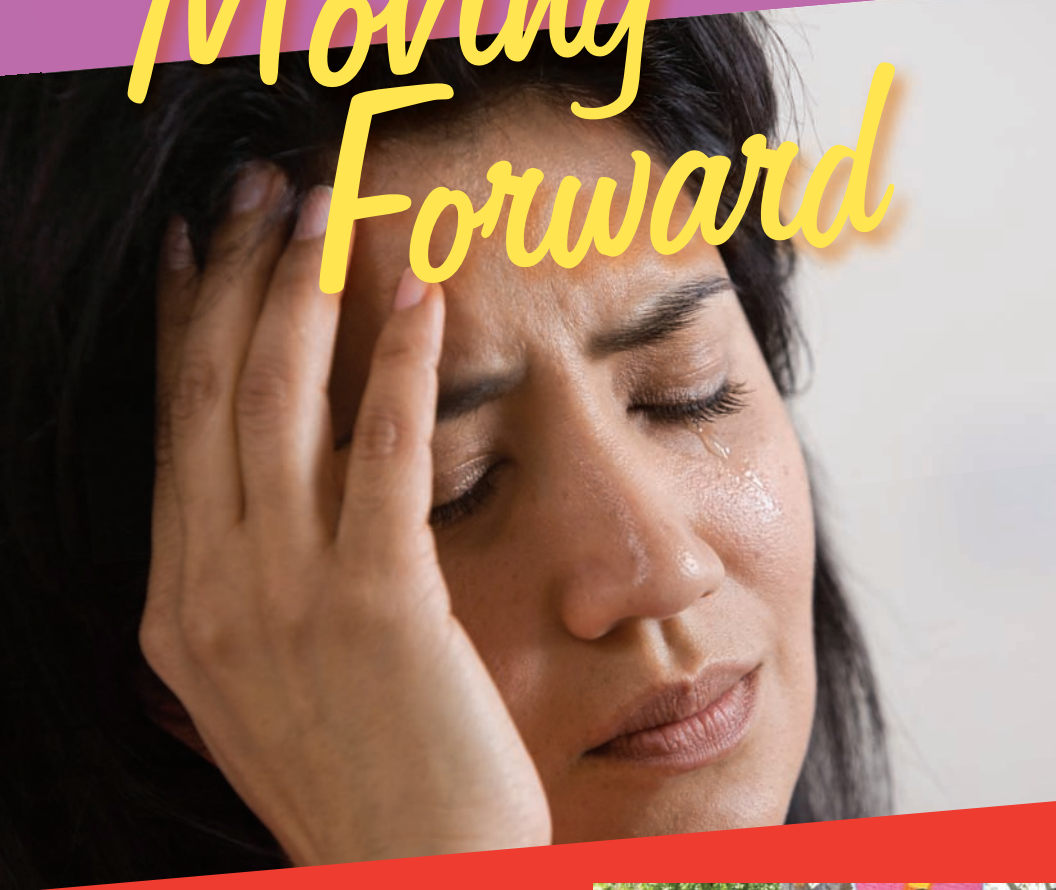


Moving Forward



How a family learns about
mental health

When does a person need help?

- Serious behavior problems with a child
- Severe feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and crying spells
- Thoughts of hurting yourself or others
- Anxiety or panic attacks
- Strange thoughts
- Mood swings

Mental health services are available to all people with Medi-Cal or without health insurance. No one is turned away based on inability to pay.

Mental health services are confidential and are based on the belief that people can and do recover from mental illness. Even though asking for help with mental health problems may be a challenge, reaching out for help is just a phone call away.

For more information or for help with mental health problems, call **(800) 479-3339** [TDD / TTY (619) 641-6992]. This toll-free number is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and provides counselors who can answer your questions and provide referrals for mental health care.



County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency

With thanks to San Diego County Library for its support in distributing this fotonovela.

Funded by the Mental Health Services Act, Prevention and Early Intervention,
County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency, Mental Health Services.

Friday morning in the kitchen
of the Lopez family.

Good morning, Dad.
Is Mom up yet?

Not yet.

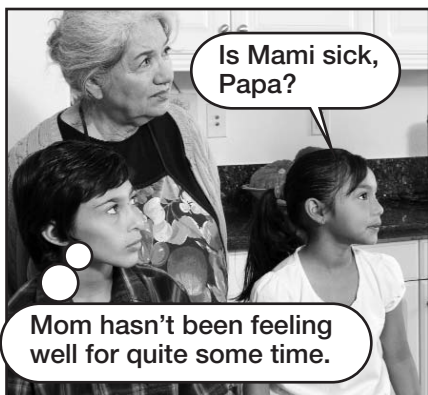


Is Mami sick,
Papa?

Mom hasn't been feeling
well for quite some time.

Is Maria Ester having
aches and pains again?
Poor thing.

Don't worry.
She's fine.



Something is wrong...



Marisol, tell your
Mom breakfast
is ready.

Mami, breakfast
is ready!



God, I'm ugly.
I'm useless. I can't
even go to work.
I'm going back
to bed.

The next day...

Mami, you said I could
go to the laundromat
with you.



No, mija. Not today.

Come on, Marisol.
We'll go to the park.



That's strange. Maria Ester likes to
take Marisol with her on Saturdays.
I need to talk to someone...



Doña Prudencia calls her spiritual advisor...

Do you remember my sister, Father?



Yes, Prudencia. She was in a lot of pain.



We didn't help her as much as we should have because of our shame, Father.



That was a different time. Now we know there's no shame in asking for help.



That's why I want to help Maria Ester, but my son is resisting...



You know how to talk to Luis, Prudencia. Just tell him what is in your heart.



Meanwhile, at the laundromat...

Hello, Maria Ester!
I was hoping you'd be
here today.



What's the matter?
You don't look so good.

Oh Luz, look at all
the laundry I have
to do. I feel so
discouraged.



I don't have that much.
Let me help you.
Then we'll sit and talk.

Here's some tea to calm
your nerves. So tell me,
what's going on?



I don't know. I'm sad
all the time. I didn't
even have the energy
to bring Marisol today.

A few years ago, my husband
felt the same way. Tired. Sad.
Angry for no reason.



We found out that he had
depression. The doctor treated
him and he started going to
group meetings. He is so much
better now.



But I'm not crazy, Luz.

Of course not. But help
is available and it's
your right to get it.



I just need some rest...

If you change your mind,
here's a number to call.
I'll go with you to your first
appointment if you like.



(800) 479-3339
TDD/TTY (619) 641-6992

What a busybody!



Please don't be offended.
I'm your friend.
Do you still want to go to
the market tomorrow?



Yes, I think so...

I don't feel up to it.
What's wrong with me?

The next day, the two friends go shopping...



Maria Ester, remind me to get garbanzos.

I should have stayed home in bed...

What did I come here for?

You said you needed tomatillos, right?



I don't remember what I'm making for dinner. I don't remember anything!



Oh dear. Don't worry...

I can't even remember
a simple grocery list.
I'm completely useless!
My God, what's the
matter with me?



Come on, I'll take you
home...



Poor thing. If she only
knew that there are
kind, understanding
and professional
people waiting to help
her through this.



Maria Ester returns home.

Hello, Maria Ester.
Do you need help
with the groceries?

Oh no, Prudencia.
Something happened
at the store. I didn't
get anything...

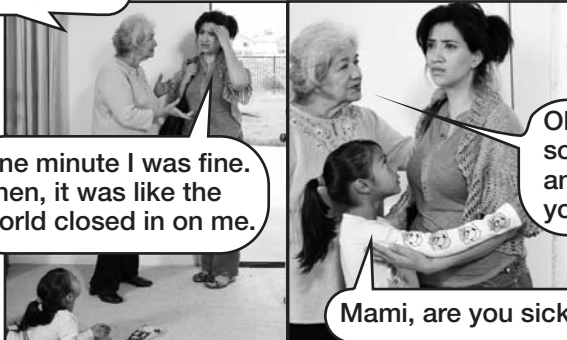


What happened, dear?

One minute I was fine.
Then, it was like the
world closed in on me.

Oh, hija. I am so
sorry. Go rest,
and I'll bring
you a cup of tea.

Mami, are you sick again?



I can't even get the groceries.
I am good for nothing.



This can't go on...



Luis comes home from work...

Papi, Mami is sick again.

Not again...



Luis, can you go to the store and get some tortillas?
I'll make bean soup for dinner.



I worked really hard today. Didn't Maria Ester get to the store?

She couldn't finish her shopping, poor thing.
I'm worried about her, Luis.



She's fine, mama.

Dad, maybe Abue is right. Maybe you should take her to the doctor.



There is nothing wrong with your mother, Diego.
Now go do your homework and take your sister with you.



Luis, do you remember your Aunt Laura?



Oh no, Mama. Don't tell me you think Maria Ester is crazy!

Hijo, my sister wasn't crazy. But she suffered so much because we didn't know how to help her.



Mama, with respect, I don't think it's the same thing.

Maybe not. But there are doctors who specialize in helping people like Maria Ester.



What will people think, Mama?



If she were physically sick, we wouldn't think twice about taking her to the doctor. This is no different, Luis.



Just talk to her, Luis. Tell her what's in your heart.

Maybe you're right...

Luis goes to Maria Ester...



Are you okay? Mama said you don't feel well.



I don't know what's happening to me anymore...I can't concentrate. I'm sad all the time. My body aches for no reason.

Do you think I'm crazy, Luis?



No, you're not crazy. Do you think you might be pregnant?

How can you ask me that? Don't you see what I'm going through?

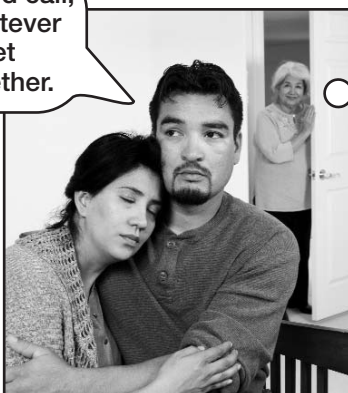


You're right. I'm sorry...

Luz said I should call the county help line. She said it's my right to get help. She gave me a number to call.



Maybe you should call, Maria Ester. Whatever happens, we'll get through this together.



Finally!

Maria Ester dials (800) 479-3339
TDD/TYY (619) 641-6992



Three months later....



So how is it going?
Are your sessions helping?



Yes! And I think the medication is working. I haven't felt like crying in weeks.



I need to apologize for the way I behaved. I should have seen that you needed help.

All that is behind us now.



I'm grateful that we found help. You're a wonderful wife and mother, and we love you very much.

Six months later....

Feliz cumpleaños, Marisol!



What a beautiful cake you made!



Thank you, Luz. A few months ago I wouldn't have been able to organize this party. I'm feeling more like myself again.

Thank you both for being so understanding, and helping me when I needed it.

That's what friends are for!



We're just happy you found the help you deserve.

It's common to react as I did. But, I learned it's important to let people know you care, and to really listen to them.



It took time for me to admit that I needed help, but I'm so proud of myself for making the call. If you need someone to talk to, or you're worried about someone you know, please call (800) 479-3339 [TDD/TTY (619) 641-6992].



Do it for yourself.
Do it for your family!